

# News Release



***Controller of the State of California - Kathleen Connell***

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## ***CONNELL'S EDUCATION PLAN TEAMS COLLEGES WITH HIGH-TECH PLAYERS***

***Controller Calls New Partnership Approach A "Natural Fit"***

LOS ANGELES, April 8 -- Uniting community colleges with major "players" in California's technology-based emerging industries is the goal of a new education program launched by State Controller Kathleen Connell today at Santa Monica College. The self-sustaining program, designed to be a national prototype, will utilize existing resources by linking Los Angeles-based high-tech companies with local community colleges in an effort to better train students and stimulate economic growth.

"Our community colleges are an untapped resource for training Californians to participate in the state's new high-tech-based economy," said Connell, California's Chief Financial Officer. "It is only natural to pair our 106 community colleges with private-sector 'mentors' -- utilizing the infrastructure already in place. Colleges with existing programs can then be enhanced and expanded with our help and at no additional cost."

The pilot program calls for the five selected community colleges to be "mentored" by companies in what Connell has termed "emerging industries" -- high-tech communications, computer-aided fashion design, new media, international trade and biosciences. Business will act as an industry bridge to the community colleges by bringing first-hand industry knowledge into classrooms; offering on-site internships for students *and* teachers; supplying support and technical expertise to develop targeted curricula and loaning state-of-the-art equipment to schools for training.

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"Before we throw money at a problem, we should marshal existing resources," said Connell. "CEOs in the emerging industries tell me there is dearth of technically-trained, qualified workers."

Los Angeles-based companies participating in the pilot program at Santa Monica College include: Columbia TriStar Television Group, Warner Bros., Walt Disney Co. and Paramount Digital Entertainment.

Connell pointed to a recent study by her office that found that California is suffering from an "education gap" that gives cause for concern that our state's education system is not producing enough qualified workers to fill California's future workforce needs.

"I've met with CEOs from across the state. Their number one concern isn't taxes or the economy -- it's the quality of the labor force," said Connell. "Many businesses are suffering because California's education system is failing to produce high-tech employees needed to fulfill industry requirements. If we're unable to meet the challenge presented by knowledge-based industries, there is a risk that high-tech California companies may choose to invest their dollars out of state."

Connell's program will be supported by legislation she is proposing and is being carried by Assemblymember Ted Lempert (D-Palo Alto). The bill, AB 1149, will offer tax credits to companies that invest in California's colleges by donating the types of equipment used in the workplace, and by helping to fund campus facilities that mirror their own.

"The community colleges don't have the resources right now to purchase the equipment themselves," said Connell. "The passage of this bill will go a long way toward helping students compete, without spending general fund dollars."

Santa Monica College is one of the first schools chosen to participate in the five-school pilot program. Four additional colleges across the state will be named throughout April, each focusing on a different "emerging" industry.

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**State Controller Kathleen Connell  
Community College Industry Partnership  
New Media Advisory Committee Members  
Santa Monica College**

John Feltheimer  
President  
**Columbia TriStar Television Group**

Jordan Kerner  
Producer  
**Walt Disney Co.**

David Master  
Director of Feature Animation Artist Development and Training  
**Warner Bros.**

David Wertheimer  
President  
**Paramount Digital Entertainment**

Leonard Washington  
Executive Vice President and Executive Producer  
**Paramount Digital Entertainment**